

prompting a consumer at said consumer location to electronically transmit an authentication token in accordance with said determined authentication token type over said network to said third party contractor location;

transmitting said authentication token electronically over said network from said consumer location to said third party contractor location; and

determining at said third party contractor location whether said account number and said authentication token are valid and, if so, then authorizing the purchase transaction to proceed.

A2
3. (amended) The method according to claim 1 wherein said account number and said authentication token are transmitted over said network via encrypted connections.

A3
6. (amended) The method according to claim 1 including the additional step of electronically transmitting a signal over said network from said third party contractor location to said on-line merchant location indicating whether said account number and authorization token are valid.

A4
10. (amended) A system for making purchases over a computer network using an account number that identifies a consumer's account from which funds will be withdrawn to pay a purchase price and an authentication token associated with said account number which, when used with said account number, enables withdrawal of funds from said account, said system comprising:

a first computer at a consumer location, said first computer being connected to said network;

a second computer at an on-line merchant location, said second computer being connected to said network; and

a third computer at a third party contractor location, said third computer being connected to said network;

said first computer being configured to (1) transmit said account number over said network to said second computer and (2) transmit said authentication token over said network to said third computer;

said second computer being configured to forward said account number received from said first computer over said network to said third computer; and

said third computer being configured to (1) determine an authentication token type associated with said account number received from said second computer, (2) prompt said first computer to transmit an authentication token in accordance with said determined authentication token type, and (3) determine whether said account number and said authentication token are valid and, if so, then authorizing the purchase to be made.

12. (amended) The system according to claim 10 wherein said account number and said authentication token are transmitted over said network via encrypted connections.

15. (amended) The system according to claim 10 wherein said third computer is further configured to notify said second computer whether said account number and said authentication token are valid.

19. (amended) A method of authorizing a purchase to be made over a computer network using an account number that identifies a consumer's account from which funds will be withdrawn to pay a purchase price and an authentication token associated with said account number which, when used with said account number, enables withdrawal of funds from said account, said method comprising the steps:

receiving at a third party contractor location said account number electronically transmitted over said network from an on-line merchant location;

determining at said third party contractor location an authentication token type associated with said account number;

prompting a consumer at a consumer location to electronically transmit over said network to said third party contractor location an authentication token in accordance with said authentication token type;

receiving at said third party contractor location said authentication token electronically transmitted over said network from said consumer location; and

verifying the validity of said account number and said authentication token at said third party contractor location, before authorizing the purchase to be made.

22. (amended) The method according to claim 19 including the additional step of electronically transmitting a signal over said network from said third party contractor location to said on-line merchant location indicating whether said account number and authorization token are valid.

25. (amended) A system for authorizing a purchase to be made over a computer network using an account number that identifies a consumer's account from which funds will be withdrawn to pay a purchase price and an authorization token associated with said account number which, when used with said account number, enables withdrawal of funds from said account, said system comprising:

a computer connected to said network;

said computer being configured to receive said account number transmitted over said network from an on-line merchant's computer, determine an authentication token type associated with said account number, prompt a consumer's computer to transmit an authentication token to said computer in accordance with said authentication token type, receive said authentication token transmitted over said network from said consumer's computer, and verify the validity of said account number and said authentication token.

28. (amended) The system according to claim 25 wherein said computer is further configured to notify said on-line merchant's computer whether said account number and authorization token are valid.

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3, 6, 10, 12, 15 19, 22, 25, and 28 have been amended to correct minor informalities. No new matter has been introduced, so that all amendments should be entered at this time.

No fees are believed to be due for the claim changes of this amendment. Should any fees be required, however, please charge such fees to Winston & Strawn deposit account no. 16-1150.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

11/26/01

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